Queens and Bulls and Volcanoes

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overnervous tourist—but between friends, one the King's Chamberlain, the other a minor official, prohibition was overlooked. We were accompanied by a guide and another native, my moy, Pauala, who had experience with a scientific expedition to the top of the mountain whence the big flow came which was so fortunately stopped by the extraordinary power of the dashing Chiefess, Ruth.

The climb down the steep lava banks was difficult, and the walk over the rough lava surface of the crater exciting; for we had to jump over crevices which revealed red hot lava in their depths, and encounter smaller cracks where, for the fun of it, we poked down our wooden staffs until their ends were bright coals of fire with which we lit out pipes. Thus we reached the most interesting of the ponds.

The phenomena of nature observed there I have never known any one to attempt to explain. Seated on the high bank of the pond, using our rolled up coats as non-heat conducting cushions, we saw the surface of pond covered as with a rubber blanket; or, if you please, with thin black ice which would bend beneath a skater. Suddenly, with a ripping sound this black ice split from edge to edge; other cracks followed with terrific crash; scarlet rips opened here and there, each uncovering molten lava, blinding almost in its fierce glare; lava which lapped the edges of the floating cakes, dragging down pieces, leaving ragged red holes in the black surface. The light becomes brighter, fiercer; the black cakes are more rapidly pulled down into the burning mass until at last not a shadow is visible, the whole surface of the pond a tumult of liquid fire, breaking in waves on the shores, troubled as the surface of water would be by a sudden squall—demoniac, appalling. Gradually the surface calmed as if exhausted by the mighty convulsion; the waves of fire ceased to break on the rocky lava shore; the glaring scarlet turned dull red, lost more color until the black ice spread from side to side—again the pond was "frozen" over. But resistless forces were not conquered, only halted; and soon the scarlet gashes reappeared, cakes separated and were sucked down into the furnace until the pond was fire again. The whole circle of this frenzy of nature was completed, as I recall, in about ten minutes, and as regularly as the tides rise and fall it was repeated.

Mauna Loa Misbehaves.

As we sat there, thrilled, silent, I chanced to notice Pauala quietly leave the group and walk to a point of the bank at a little distance, where he gravely tossed two things into the pit when the tumult and glare were greatest. Later he admitted to me that his offerings were his plug of tobacco and a silver dollar, his most treasured possessions, which he had offered as a sacrifice to Pili, Goddess of Fire. But he was a Christian, quite orthodox, carrying his pair of shoes with him always when he went to church as a mark of respect to the pastor.

A few hundred yards distant was the second unfrozen pond in the floor of the crater; Halemaumau, if I remember the spelling, which translates "Lake of Everlasting Fire." Here the tossing lava was never subdued; the surface was always stirred into waves and breakers. From the splash of the waves the wind tore off lava sprays and bore them to the banks where they lay, hardened by their flight through the air, fine spun threads. That was called Pili's hair, and any mortal wearing such would have to bob it with a file.

Kilauea, the whole nine-mile-round bowl, overflows when the floor is forced up to a level with its banks, but it is the high crater, Mauna Loa, which most frequently misbehaves in that way. Pauala, as I have said, was there once when Mauna Loa was active and he told me that the lava river came from the crater not in a steady stream, but as the blood is pumped from the heart, in orderly pulsations. "How much each pulse?" I asked. He looked about as if seeking something for comparison, and after a pause exclaimed: "Shipload! Big shipload each time she breathe. O-o-f-f-e!—shipload!"

Considering that significant life characteristic in connection with the regular recurrence of the breaking up and calking over of Kilauea it strikes one that there are mysterious forces at work beneath the surface of this best of earths about which much less than nothing is known. That makes it the more interesting to think about.

Returning to Hilo we sailed from there part way around the big island to a landing, where we began a two days' hike up the flanks of Mauna Kea, the majestic mountain mate of Mauna Loa, to visit the cattle ranch of Col. Sam Parker, a high caste half white. The horseback ride was broken by a stop over night at the plantation of an Englishman, who was on a ship wrecked on the islands half a century before that time and had never since left Hawaii. He was a magistrate of sort, the only representative of the Crown in the district, and had for his only white neighbor a French priest, Father Xavier, who had gone into the district a missionary, fresh from a French Catholic seminary, sixty years before and remained there ever since. The comradeship between these two men was one of the sweetest I ever encountered. Spencer, the Englishman, big, hearty, bluff, denying in every movement, every tone, his seventy-odd years, was an Episcopalian; he never omitted going to his church when he visited Honolulu—once every two or three years. The Frenchman, slight, gentle, attending daily to his priestly duties among the parishioners of his small and rapidly diminishing parish, was the picture of a holy ascetic. Yet he was something besides. In our party were two young Englishmen who were installing movable railways and their equipment on sugar plantations, and Father Xavier, having learned of our coming, was in a flutter of gentle excitement and curiosity about them. Railways on the plantations? Well, well, the outside world is sending us strange things. He joined us before dinner after our arrival at Spencer's, and without seeming inquisitiveness soon learned of the outside activities of each. To him I was M'sieur le Redacteur, and would have none of my attempted explanation that I was not an editor, only a reporter.

Before dinner Spencer mixed for us what, with a roar and a laugh, he called a bull cocktail. I never learned its ingredients, but compared to it raw brandy is fresh milk. These having been served to all the guests except the priest, our host went to a cupboard and produced French wines and cordials, and some little cakes. He winked as he whispered to us in a voice audible, I am certain, at the top of Mauna Kea, "The good Father is too young a chap to be offered spirits, so I have some of these foolish French beverages for him."

"Ah," said the priest, "Pakana (Hawaiian for Spencer) will have his joke about ages. He's only a few years past his threescore and ten, but when he arrives at years of discretion—mine, for instance, eighty-three—he'll have respect for my cloth."

During dinner one could imagine these old comrades as like a good natured mastiff and a sprightly fox terrier who had no other playmates. They tumbled each other about, and now and then nipped each other, and if the fox terrier administered a sharp nip the mastiff sat up with a broad grin as if to say, "There, now, did you see that? Isn't he the little devil of a dog?" The magistrate and the priest looked after the worldly and spiritual welfare of the simple native dwellers in the district as if they had been intrusted with the care of children. They were much together, those two, seeing no others of their kind sometimes for a year or more. But some day—it may be there even now—a hideous little railroad will poke its impudent, sooty nose into that fair land of perfect climate, and where the magistrate and the priest in calm content passed the evening of their days there will be abattoirs and cold storage warehouses and cattle and hog corrals. Phew!

After dinner, when card tables were brought out for the others, the gentle Father asked me if I would like to see his church. We strolled in the moonlight a little way to a church, such as one may see in a thousand American villages, and turned at the entrance where the Father asked eagerly, "Did you notice? Did you see what we passed through just where the stone path begins?"

"Through an opening in a stone fence," I answered.

"Through what was the entrance to my old church," he said, half in pride, half in regret.

It was so. We walked completely around the little church, following the lines of stone foundation of a church of much greater size, quite surrounding the new church. The old one had been torn down and the new built with part of the old material; the rest—scattered.

"You had many parishioners in the early days?"

"When I came here there were twenty-five thousand natives in the district. To-day? I thank God when I can count sixty in my church. And, ah, so few children!"

"The old thousands—dead?"

"Yes, or scattered. Some go to the harbors, the towns, the plantations where they can, if they wish, earn money. Here? Only my blessing"—he paused and smiled—"and Pakana's scolding. Ah, well, I try to do Christ's work. And Pakana, too. He's a good old heretic. He has no superior officer to bother him and I"—he paused, then added with a smile—"no bishop calls on me."

"The good Father is too young a chap to be offered spirits, so I have some of these foolish French beverages for him."

We rode on up the mountain to Parker's cattle ranch where we discovered a cheerful state of things. I think there was no other house within twenty miles, yet here the half doezn cottages were lighted by American-plant-made gas, there was abundant water served by modern household plumbing, and the large grounds around the cottages were laid out artistically in flower gardens. All very unlike American cattle ranch homes. Our dinner, too, was served in a style quite à la mode; and in the morning a dozen boys were saddling horses for us, loading packs on others, and as many girls were in the garden weaving leis for us; for even in lowly Hawaiian households a visitor is crowned with flowers on arrival and departure.

Crowned With Flowers.

Our further excursion up the mountain was to abate two nuisances which easily turned into sport. We were to shoot wild bulls who enticed heifers away from Parker's commercial herds—with promises of freedom from branding irons, no doubt—and to shoot wild boars who, for some pleasing purpose of their own, uprooted numberless tree ferns, thereby destroying pasturage.

As we were about to make camp that evening the boys discovered a bunch of young pigs, and the prompt offer of a silver dollar for the first boy who, without leaving his saddle, caught a young porker for the cook, started a whirlwind of fun. The little porkers, lively as rabbits, disdained to escape into the brush, but dodged and attacked. They had no tusks, but thought they had, and viciously swung their heads at the horses' legs in the belief that what their tusked papas had taught them would happen when their snouts were armed would happen then. There was good horsemanship, too, for the boys with shouts of "Awea ke meka ae!"—which I translate, "Let 'er go, Gallagher"—were managing their horses finely, and swinging low trying to grasp a darting pig's hind leg. One succeeded, swung the squealing fighter over his saddle, and became the proud possessor of much silver.

A Wild Bull Hunt.

There is not space between here and the end of the chapter to tell more of that experience than the exhibition of atavism which threw Col. Parker back a full century. A candle lit tent, where serious seekers drew for flushes, full hands and fours, held its company so late that first night that only one of the railroad builders, a Mr. Fowler, and I had the gumption to join Parker on a wild bull hunt. Just before dawn we three, each accompanied by a rifle carrying boy, trotted away from camp accompanied also, for I must not fail to mention that hero, a mongrel dog no fancier would give a punched penny for. He was worth his weight in gold. As dawn broke Parker discovered in a valley below the ridge where we were on the lookout a bunch of his cattle overlorded by three wild bulls, and the first job was to cut the bulls out. Parker spurred off first, calling out to us not to try to steer our horses around the fallen tree ferns, but to let our mounts take the jumps as they willed.

Fowler and I somehow managed to keep our seats, Parker and the boys riding beautifully, and all yelling, "Awea ke meka ae!" but not drowning the mongrel's sharp yips of defiance. At the alarm the cattle which had been led into bad company from the range took refuge behind the bulls, who stood their ground angrily. Fowler and I remained discreetly in the rear as the other men and that astonishing dog cut out the bulls and induced them, when their herd had galumphed off into a zone of safety, to make a sullen retreat. Parker then told Fowler and me to take our rifles, saying: "There's one bull I have a personal grudge against. I'll get him; then each of you is to have a shot."

The bull Parker had a grudge against was the most reluctant to give ground; he would amble off a bit, change his mind and charge us; get nipped and slanged by that amazing dog, and again retreat. Parker dismounted, rifle in hand, stooped, flattened in the long grass, and began his advance. Then we two outlanders who watched forgot everything else in our realization that we were witnessing the process of atavism which dominated the big half native—the handsome man I later saw admired in polite society in New York and Washington for his polished courtesy. But it was not Sam Parker we saw then; it was an Hawaiian of centuries before; a warrior craftily approaching an enemy within spear throwing distance. The grass through which he cautiously crawled scarcely moved, even when he lifted his head now and then as a stalking lion might for a sight of his prey. The bull, seeing no man pursuing, was trying to hook that yelping dog, which was making a bold bluff to get a throwing hold of the bull's nose.

The Finish of the Beast.

From where Parker lay unseen there was a flash, a sharp crack; the bull shivered, staggered, fell dead.

"Now it's our turn," said Fowler.

But we had not yet realized the extent of that throw back. Parker crept on toward a second bull, the dog repeated his gallant performance; a second shot sounded and the second bull dropped. It was a minute or two before Parker rose from the grass, turned as if bewildered, then slowly walked back to us, looking not unlike a man recovering from an anaesthetic. "I—I am sorry," he said. "I—I forgot." We said nothing. "We'll have another chance tomorrow," he added, brightening. "Now we'll capture that third bull and lead him back to camp to show those lazy poker players."

Parker, the boys and that indomitable dog maneuvered the bull into the open, where he could be lassoed, during which proceeding Fowler and I improved our horsemanship by many precipitate retreats when the bull charged.

But I must return to San Francisco and take my assignment to report a session of the California Legislature. And a famous session it was. A former United States Senator was, it was generally known, to be sent to the Senate again at the dictation of the Central-Southern Pacific railroads. To the amazement of the politicians of the whole country, the railroads' boss in the Legislature turned down the programmed candidate, who had once offended that boss, and elected instead the head of those railroad companies—Leland Stanford.

[This is the sixth of a series of articles by Mr. Townsend. The seventh will appear in an early issue.]

The Pet Poets of Moscow

(From Our Moscow Correspondent.)

BOLSHEVISM has its pet poets, musicians and journalists, a whole army of them, whose duty it is to give artistic expression to the atmosphere of Communism. It cannot be said that they have been strikingly successful so far.

Perhaps the receipt of a State salary and the feeling that he is at the beck and call of the State has a dulling effect on the creative faculties of the artist. Something of the kind has been long suspected in the case of Poets Laureates in England. Or perhaps it is the Communistic atmosphere that does not lend itself to artistic treatment.

Whatever the reason, the result is the same. The poets draw their salaries or rations in lieu, but they produce nothing that even the wildest of wild modern poetic arnarchists could call poetry.

Lunacharsky, who is Commissary for Fine Arts, is a man of praiseworthy energy and ambition; some time ago he made up his mind that a new opera had better be written, an opera that would live as an artistic production of Sovietism.

He sent round a circular to all the pet poets and musicians kept by the Soviet republic, intimating his order. During the period of incubation rations for the struggling artists were to be increased. Failure would entail a decrease if not a cessation of rations.

So for a while they all toiled mightily, and ate rather more than usual. But neither toil nor food brought inspiration.

In the end the idea was abandoned, or at least modified. If Bolshevism could not produce an opera of its own it would take some established opera and "Bolshevize" it.

A journalist, Dvinsky, and the Chief Pet Poet, Lebedef, were entrusted with the task. It is now approaching completion.

The opera chosen for "Bolshevization" is the well known "Life for the Tzar." Pernicious political tendencies in the text and the music have been sternly suppressed, and the revolutionized work is to be produced shortly at the Moscow Opera House as "Iwan Suzanin," a Soviet opera.

If it is a success we shall no doubt have a series of like experiments. There is no reason why "Faust" should not be Bolshevized, and Wagner's mythological ring offers obvious opportunities to a Bolshevizer intent on demonstrating the utter futility of gods, goddesses, nymphs, Walkyries and other creatures of morbid and superstitious fancy.